

4. Troutman WG, Murray LL, Norlander B: An estimation of the annual incidence of poisoning using automated telephone polling. *Clin Toxicol* 1990; 28:193-202
5. King WD, Palmisano PA: Poison control centers: Can their value be measured? *South Med J* 1991; 84:722-726
6. Chafee-Bahamon C, Lovejoy FH: Effectiveness of a regional poison center in reducing excess emergency room visits for children's poisonings. *Pediatrics* 1983; 72:164-169
7. Guterman J, Koehler G, Galli RL, Haynes BE: Poison control centers are cost effective. *Ann Emerg Med* 1989; 18:444
8. Kearney TE: Update on certification of poison centers. *Vet Hum Toxicol* 1989; 31:394-397
9. Barer J: Fatal poisoning from salt used as an emetic. *Am J Dis Child* 1973; 125:889
10. Alderman D, Burke M, Cohen B, et al: How adequate are warnings and first-aid instructions on consumer product labels? An investigation. *Vet Hum Toxicol* 1982; 24:8-11
11. Schweich PJ, DeAngelis C, Duggan AK: Preparedness of practicing pediatricians to manage emergencies. *Pediatrics* 1991; 88:223-229
12. Andrulis DP, Kellermann A, Hintz EA, Hackman BB, Weslowski VB: Emergency departments and crowding in United States teaching hospitals. *Ann Emerg Med* 1991; 20:980-986
13. Shortliffe F, Hamilton T, Nororian E: The emergency room and the changing pattern of medical care. *N Engl J Med* 1958; 258:20-25
14. Grumbach K, Keane D, Bindman A: Primary care and public emergency department overcrowding. *Am J Public Health* 1993; 83:372-378

\* \* \*

## The Abortion

She came across in the hands of paramedics  
 who had stuffed her full of packing  
 and wore her bright blood in their laps.  
 "Light bulb," their report read,  
 "self-inflicted." She hissed  
 straight past the whispering  
 ER doors to us, the OR—  
 floor of last resort.

As we unravelled bandages  
 she went the color of old wax.  
 Stained shards tinkled to the floor  
 and clotted to our shoes  
 as we tried to keep her  
 (so sharded, so small,  
 the long ones imbedded in the blooming  
 bulb of uterus) and though we worked  
 to get her back, she bled out  
 on our clean white sheets.

Mitch, who gave the anesthesia,  
 pumping sweet air and oblivion,  
 helped me wrap the shroud  
 and then we dropped our blood-  
 drenched scrubs and all constraint  
 at the men's room door and together  
 in the little shower, we let the water,  
 hot as we could stand it,  
 wash over us.

ELLEN DUDLEY<sup>©</sup>  
*Marlboro, Vermont*